

**MINUTES
WOONSOCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2005
7:00 P.M. -OPEN SESSION
WACTC-ROOM 303
MULTI-MEDIA ROOM**

Call to Order at 7:15 P.M.

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

Marc Dubois-Chairman	Present
Michael Bileau-Vice Chairman	Present
Allen Auclair	Present
John Ward	Present
Michelle Williams	Present

GOOD AND WELFARE-PUBLIC:

Mr. Richard DiPardo, 134 Huntington Street, Woonsocket, stated that at the last meeting, the Middle School principal stated some facts that he wanted clarified. Words are his life and they must be precise. Mrs. Valentine stated that twenty to forty teachers call in sick everyday and there was a gasp from the audience when she made that comment. He has reviewed the most current accounting since September and the absents for teachers are 3,4,4,2,6,7,3,3,4,5,6,6,5,2,9,12,13,15,8 and so on. There is only one day when thirty people were out. Also, why didn't the Principal say what the reasons were for the absenteeism? Some folks are sick, professional days and one, young woman is out on maternity leave and she is a guidance counselor that do not get replaced and that shows as someone out. Twenty to forty is an exaggeration and puts down the staff at the Middle School. An average good number of absents for a Middle School of its size is twenty out of one hundred and thirty people per day. That is what the norm is. She should be handing out attendance awards. Secondly, a reporter asked him at the last meeting about Mrs. Valentine's stating that he told her in a one to one conversation that she better extend a carrot to the faculty or she will be taken down. He can't one hundred percent deny that statement but he doesn't use that terminology and she should have understood that he meant to try and meet the staff half way. Three members of the School Committee have met with the faculty of the Middle School and they understand there are severe problems there. He suggested that the School Committee hold an meeting in executive session with him, Mrs. Valentine and her staff and the faculty and have a heart to heart regarding common ground. There are real difficulties and they have to be on the same page to move forward. He asked for a reply from the Chairman soon regarding his request.

Ms. Donna Houle, 130 Ward Street, thanked the Facilities Director for installing the lights at Globe, Bernon and the Middle School during the recent vacation.

Ms. Carmine Boucher, also, thanked the Facilities Director for the new lights. On April 15th, students and fifteen teachers enjoyed a successful Earth Day where they collected twenty bags of trash. They had a beautiful day. On April 13th, she, as a PTO Co-Chair, and fifteen people participated in Reading Day and she thanked all the teachers and students who participated.

Ms. Pauline Papino, of Smithfield, reminded parents that the 8th Grade Dance will be held on May 20th at the Bocci Club and the New York trip is scheduled for June 11th.

Ms. Marlene Smith, Monica Drive, Cumberland, stated there has been a lot of sickness at the Middle

School and lots of teachers have dragged themselves in. The one day when thirty teachers were out, she believes it was due to a Math conference. Teachers used to ask students to bring in their own Kleenex and now they hand rolls of toilet tissue around the room. She asked if the State Department of Education includes Channel 1 time in their extended learning time because that accounts for twelve minutes of time and the students enjoy it and watch it. Dr. D'Acchioli said Channel 1 time is acceptable.

RECOGNITIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Dr. D'Acchioli extended special recognition to Mr. William Webb, Graphics teacher at the WACTC. Mr. Webb was featured in Vanguard, a trade publication. His honor brings greater recognition to the district.

Congratulations were extended to WHS Senior, Ashley Guiney for taking 1st place in the Piano Extravaganza Festival Competition at URI. Ashley performed a piano selection by J.S. Bach, and a selection by Debussy, to win the first prize. Nice going Ashley.

The following students were named by the Providence Journal as First Team All Division Sports Athletes.

Gymnastics: Lauren Anastasiades

Boy's Indoor Track: Ray Desvasiers, Craig Pearce

Wrestling: Andrew Palin

Boy's Basketball: Tyrone Nared

Hockey: Cruz Paquin

Congratulations are, also, extended to the many other students recognized by the Providence Journal as All Division Sports Athletes.

For the second year in a row, Citizens Memorial School has won the RIF Reading Challenge. Congratulations to all participants and in particular to teachers

A formal recognition and thank you went to the Bernon community – students, staff and parents for conducting a successful Earth Day cleanup last week.

In the spirit of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 2-6), Dr. D'Acchioli closed this section of his report with a very hearty and sincere thank you to all of their fine teachers.

Motion to receive and place of file

AA Second: MB/JW

Unanimously approved

Chairman Dubois welcomed back Mr. Legare, owner of Valley Transportation, back who was in the audience and had been recently ill.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the Open and Closed Minutes of April 13, 2005 and including the corrections to Minutes of March 23, 2005 Pages 3 & 6

JW Second: AA

Chairman Dubois asked that the last word on his Good & Welfare be changed from 'before' to 'in a while' on page 11. Mr. Auclair asked if on page 8, a line could be added for clarification between the first and second paragraph the Summer School program discussion to read as: 'Mr. Auclair inquired as to the elementary promotion policy.'

Motion to approve the Open and Closed Minutes of April 13, 2005 including the two corrections mentioned to the Open Minutes and including the corrections to Minutes of March 23, 2005 Pages 3 & 6

MD Second: MW

Unanimously approved

CONSENT AGENDA:

Personnel Actions: (See Attached)

- Certified Appointments
- Non-Certified Appointments

Purchases/Transfers Over \$2,000

Local

- B & H photo/Camcorder & Lens/WHS/Local-\$2,291.45
- Group Benefits Strategies/Contract/District/Local-\$3,000.00
- Scoreboard Enterprises, Inc./Shot Timers/WHS/Loca-\$4,220.00
- Perkins, Smith & Cohen, LLP./Promac/McFee/Local-\$31,320.67
- Visconti & Boren, Ltd./Promac/McFee/Local-\$7,718.75
- Wistow & Barylick, Inc./Promac/McFee/Local-\$15,536.82

Grant

- Summit Learning/Educational Materials/District/Grant-\$3,713.69

Lunch Rev.

- Manville Mechanical/Cooler Repairs/WHS/Lunch Revenue-\$5,950.00

Field Trips/Conference Request

- National Leadership Conference-FBLA, Orlando, FL/WHS/Student Proceeds

Home Schooling Requests (1)

Disposal of Obsolete Equipment

Mr. Bileau asked that the Field Trip be removed and Mr. Auclair asked that the B&H Photo purchase be removed for discussion.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of the two items mentioned

MD Second: AA

Unanimously approved

Mr. Bileau asked regarding the field trip what happens if there are students who want to go but can't afford it?

Dr. Macera stated she spoke with Mrs. O'Rourke and they have many fund raising efforts and no child is left out. All students know this and it is a club.

Mr. Ward asked that is the field trip is outside of school and after the school year finishes, why is it before the Committee?

Dr. Macera stated that the registration is paid through a grant. The students pay for the transportation and the trip. This is very important for students to have on their resume.

Mr. Auclair stated that the B & H Photo purchase is for a camcorder and lens for the high school's visual arts. There is equipment at the WACTC.

Dr. Macera stated that the equipment at the WACTC is State funded and this equipment is for the High School.

Motion to approve the field trip and the B & H Photo purchase
Unanimously approved

JW Second: MB

COMMUNICATIONS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ms. Carmine Boucher, a Co-Chair of the Advisory Council, thanked everyone for reading all of her emails. There will be a workshop regarding bridging the discipline gap where they will have two speakers attending. It will be at the Middle School and Saturday, April 30th from 10:00-2:00 P.M. in the cafeteria and she extended an invitation to everyone and she, also, read the announcement in Spanish.

CONFERENCES:

Mr. Barry Cote asked about the guidelines for getting a bus pass and why is the distance so far away to be eligible for a bus? A child was hit near a school a week ago.

Chairman Dubois explained that there is a policy in which the School Committed enacted. Dr. D'Acchioli stated that the last School Committee actually shortened the distance when the computers came in because they were better able to track and locate eligible students. They would love to do more but they can't afford it. The transportation budget now is 1.5M.

Mr. Cote stated his son walks 2.5 miles over hills and sidewalks are covered with snow in the winter and there is a street where there are no houses on it. He just found out he was walking to school. Why are you paying for field trips when kids need transportation to get to school?

Chairman Dubois stated they checked the walk to school and it is 1.8 miles and Dr. D'Acchioli stated that the District does not pay for field trips.

Mr. Auclair stated that there is a city ordinance for homeowners to clear their sidewalks. He should pursue that with the City and send the Committee a list of suggestions.

Mr. Cote stated he would like to see a team effort to get things changed.

Motion to deny the bus appeal
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

MD Second: AA

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Motion to table the approval of the WMS Handbook-2nd passage AA Second: MB

Mr. Auclair stated he spoke with Mrs. Valentine and that all the changes would not be completed until the end of May for the first School-Committee meeting in June. There will be substantial changes and they will still be in time for the printers.

Dr. D'Acchioli suggested that if there is going to be substantial changes, perhaps instead of tabling this, Mrs. Valentine should bring this back and start back at the first passage so they can review all the changes.

Mr. Auclair withdrew his motion to table.

Mr. Ward asked that perhaps a member of the School Committee and a Union representative should work with Mrs. Valentine and Administration to understand the impact of the changes in the handbook for informational purposes. This would help the Committee to understand the substantial changes. Chairman Dubois stated he would solicit everyone. Dr. D'Acchioli supports the idea of someone from the Committee working with them and he feels Mrs. Valentine will be referring to the SALT report for some of the

revisions.

Motion to deny approval of the WMS Handbook-2nd Passage **AA Second: MB**
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Motion to approve the Summer School Programs-2nd Passage **MD Second: MB**
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Dr. D'Acchioli stated they are looking to cover all fees by grants. Dr. Macera stated that she and Mrs. Valentine feel comfortable they will have enough room to cover all the kids. If there are more kids then they can handle, the priority is to the failing students which are selected first.

NEW BUSINESS:

Motion to approve bid award #05-11 Group Term Life Insurance to Keough Kirby Associates through Dearborn Life for a three-year contract at a cost of .41 per 1K equating to approximately \$60,516 per year **MD Second: MB/AA**
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Motion to approve bid award #05-12 Art & Education Supplies to Wolkins School Supplies & Equipment **MD Second: MB**
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Motion to approve bid award #05-19 for Food Service Equipment to Kittredge Equipment Company, Inc in the amount of \$30,609.00 **AA Second: MB**
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Mr. Auclair stated that this equipment is for setting up a kitchen for culinary arts this fall where nine items are being purchased: food mixer, double convention oven, reach-in refrigerator, reach-in freezer, a cube-style ice maker, a sandwich top refrigerated counter unit, an under-counter dishwasher, a 60" gas range and (12) 72" work tables.

Dr. D'Acchioli stated that this will be at the WACTC and now they can seek students from other Districts, as well.

Motion to appoint Mr. George Nasuti as the Woonsocket High School Principal
MB Second: JW
Roll Call Vote (All Yes)

Dr. D'Acchioli read his letter of recommendation (**SEE ATTACHMENT #2**). All five members praised Mr. Nasuti for his Work at Coleman and congratulated him on his appointment. Mr. Auclair requested that he work on a student-liaison to the School Committee and setting up an academic decathlon. Mr. Nasuti received an ovation from the Committee and the entire audience.

Motion to approve the FY04 Audit Report **AA Second: MB**
Roll Call Vote (AA-Yes, MB-Yes, MD- Yes, JW- No, MW-Abstain)

Dr. D'Acchioli recommended approval of the audit report. Answers from the auditors were received late and the amended report now shows an approximate 70K surplus and as further changes are uncovered, that number should be more positive. Copies of this report are available at the libraries and City Hall.

Mr. Ward was outraged at such a poor product that is put out year after year by these auditors.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. D'Acchioli began by addressing some comments made at the last meeting. It was stated that the length of last meeting's agenda was too long. After he reviewed the tape, he needed to state that the agenda was appropriate as all items were moved in less than one and one half hours time. To keep future meetings on schedule, he suggested that individuals speaking under Good and Welfare be limited to a set number of speakers on any given issue and that the speaking time, also, be limited.

As far as specific attacks directed at the Middle School, the material is getting old. The Middle School now has a full and consistent leadership team. They are there to stay. The words of Nicholas C. Donohue, Special Master for Hope High School are appropriate for Woonsocket Middle School. Master Donohue, commenting on Hope High School stated that "this school has been under the spotlight. People are raw from all the attention. The healing needs to go on." These words are just as appropriate for their Middle School. Let the Middle School leadership do the job they were hired to do. They need time to establish themselves and work on correcting age-old problems that were allowed to linger and even grow under previous administrations. These individuals are making much needed changes and they need and deserve the support of this Committee and every teacher working in the Middle School.

It was, also, stated at the last meeting that Middle School teachers were fearful of non-renewal should they be identified as making complaints against the Administration. There is no basis of truth to that statement. There are approximately one hundred non-tenured teachers in any given school year. On average, five non-tenured teachers are recommended for non-renewal based on poor performance. In the past three years, out of a three-year pool of approximately three hundred non-tenured teachers, sixteen teachers were issued non-renewal letters. Of those sixteen, only one was from the Middle School. The statements about fear and retaliation were meant to support complaints and create an unreal negative scenario. Those statements were not based on practice or supported by data.

It is time for RIDE officials, School Committee and Administration to meet. Immediately following receipt of the Middle School SALT report, Dr. D'Acchioli will attempt to schedule another retreat so that specific intervention plans for the Middle School can be unveiled.

Regarding Mr. Bileau's and his absence last week, they were representing the district at a RIDE meeting regarding high school graduation requirements. Also attending the meeting was Mr. Vachon, Mr. Riley and Dr. Bedard. Absent was a representative of the Teachers' Guild. This month there will be demonstration sites offered throughout the state. The WACTC has scheduled May 5 and May 18 to showcase student portfolios.

Regarding the Universal Free Breakfast program, how does one determine success without setting clearly defined criteria prior to implementation? If one examines the data, a 20% increase in participation represents only sixteen students. He would like to receive from Committee what measures that they would like to see used to determine whether or not the program is a success. By the way, a short twenty-one day blitz is a lot easier to accomplish than a longer sustained effort to get students to stay with the program that they have already clearly refused to use. They seem to be forgetting that of the 195 students eligible for a free breakfast, only 84 are taking advantage of it. If they are to believe all of the rhetoric of the Universal Free Breakfast promoters, then it is not unreasonable to expect a mere 16 out of a potential 111 students to now participate. Make no mistake; he supports any and all activities that will get qualifying students to take advantage of this program. His reluctance has been with providing a free breakfast to those who can afford to pay.

Over the course of this week, various Directors will be spending time with RIDE officials reviewing reporting requirements for end-of-year and grant submissions.

The deadline for nominations for exemplary employee of the year has been extended to May 2 and the Awards program has been rescheduled for the June 8 School Committee meeting.

Based on Committee's appointment of Mr. Nasuti this evening, he will be hosting a voluntary meeting at

2:00 PM at the high school to introduce George to the High School faculty.

Similar to almost every other RI school district, the W.E.D. has been receiving volumes of fire code violations. He mentions this to first assure the Committee and the community that their buildings that despite the violations, they are safe; and, second to inform the Committee that many of the minor violations are being addressed and that the significant violations have been and will continue to be appealed to the State. Be assured that what they are experiencing is happening in every other R.I. school district.

There are only thirty-seven days remaining in this school year. Enrollment data will be rolled over and staffing needs will be reassessed prior to a May 18 internal Job Fair.

The week after next officially begins the greatest time of the school year. On Friday, May 13, the high school play, Music Man, will start a period of student performances, celebrations and recognitions that clearly demonstrate what a very fine school district we have. He invited the Committee and the Public to attend and enjoy the many activities that will be taking place over the next thirty-seven days.

With all of the activities going on, it is a great time to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week (May 2-6). With that said, Dr. D'Acchioli closed this section of his report with a very hearty and sincere thank you to all of their fine teachers.

Motion to receive and place on file said Superintendent's Report

AA Second: JW

Unanimously approved

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOOD AND WELFARE:

Ms. Williams stated she abstained from the audit report because to the average lay person, budgets are confusing to all and with Mr. Ward's reluctance to accept this report and this is his area of expertise, she decided to abstain until everything is in. She congratulated Mr. Nasuti and knows he will do a fantastic job as he did at Coleman. Caleb Bessett, a Savoie student, sent her a letter inviting her to the Mini-Walk-A-Thon for the March of Dimes on May 4th from 9:30-10:30 and all are welcomed. They had their first Health & Wellness meeting this past Monday and she thanked Diane Engels, the district nurse, for going to all the schools and surveying their soda machines in the teachers' lounges, etc. She thanked Dr. D'Acchioli for wearing his 'MacDonald's tie' with its Big Mac and fries on it. There will be another Health & Wellness meeting on Tuesday, May 10th from 3-4:00 P.M. and the Middle School Consumer Science Room. She commended Mr. Fontaine for the lighting at Globe Park. She explained that there have been changes made to the food pyramid and Sodexo has its work cut out. She was concerned about something written in the Middle School's principal's notes regarding the bathrooms. They are trying to wean students off from talking a walk to the bathroom by giving them two passes a day that they can use when they need to. Also, the custodians will be checking the bathrooms twice an hour and there are no female custodians and she is concerned about a male custodians going into the Girls' bathroom. Also, kids could plan to meet up and cause vandalism to the new bathrooms. She would like this looked into. She welcomed back Mr. Legare.

Mr. Auclair congratulated Mr. Nasuti and thanked Mr. Fontaine on changing the lighting at several schools and it has made a world of difference at the Middle School. It not only offers better lighting and more energy efficient but they are removing mercury from the building. He welcomed back Mr. Legare. He asked if Mr. Fontaine had pursued the EPA healthy community grants for possible funding for indoor quality air tools. The paperwork is due this Friday and he volunteered his help if needed. In the hallway this evening, he left copies of 'Speaking of Kids' which is hosted by the Hasbro and Bradley Hospitals, that offers free programs and he will be attending some himself. One of the programs is 'Parenting Teenagers in a Changing World' and 'Making the System Work With A Child With ADHD'. He volunteered to work on the Middle-School handbook as Mr. Ward had suggested if there were no objections. He stated that North Smithfield had just rejected a new Middle School and concerned that could happen in Woonsocket in the future. He thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Dr. D'Acchioli stated that the citizens of Woonsocket support their schools. There was a five to one vote when they voted on new elementary schools. Their success was because the School Committee and Superintendent took to the streets as a group and went to high-rises and answered all the questions. This has not be done elsewhere. Once they locate a site, put a brochure together and get a design architect, they can do their homework and be successful again.

Mr. Bileau welcomed back Mr. Legare and commented on how well he looked. He told Mr. DiPardo he would love to see a work session regarding the Middle School. Two weeks ago at the Middle School he read to a class and just received a letter from Mrs. Benjamin's class where they all signed it and invited him back. He congratulated Mr. Nasuti. He thanked Mrs. Marlene Smith for allowing him to visit and see the video streaming that she uses. Great job.

Chairman Dubois stated he received an invitation to the Walk-A-Thon being held on May 4th at 9:30 from Caitlin Raymond at Savoie. He has to work that day but urged everyone to attend or sponsor someone. There will be refreshments and raffles and they raised over eight thousand dollars last year. He welcomed back Mr. Legare and congratulated Mr. Nasuti.

Mr. Ward congratulated Mr. Nasuti and looking forward to the new vice-principal at the High School and a candidate to be the new principal at Coleman. They will have Mr. Nasuti as a resource. He thanked Mr. Prince for when he filled in on a show co-hosted by a politician at a local radio station. They then stopped at Savoie where Mr. Prince gave him a tour and he was very impressed by the staff and students and the tone and look of the building. He believes the North Smithfield School was rejected due to a \$300 tax bill per household. He welcomed back Mr. Legare. He likes the idea of the work session Mr. DiPardo suggested but not sure it can be a closed session. There is no basis under to law to hold it in a closed session. They are a public body and do not have the luxury of closing the doors. He supports the meeting but not in closed session. Dr. D'Acchioli suggested a retreat. The audit they approved tonight serves no purpose except a point of reference. He voted no because he was so disappointed in the product. It is very disturbing.

Motion to adjourn at 8:50 P.M.
Unanimously approved

MD Second: MB

Respectfully submitted,

Denise St Germain
Secretary to the School Committee